

Dancing in Mormon Land

The New York Times Tells How the Young People of Utah and Idaho Engage in This Pastime.

Dancing is the universal social diversion of the genuine westerner. From the isolation of the mining camp, the cattle range, or the wheat field he is always eager to turn to the music of the violin or piano that instantly sets his feet in motion. He may be attracted by the iniquities of the saloon, the gambling house or the public dance hall; but these diversions bring out the worst elements in his character. To observe him at his best, so as to show all the high lights of his nature, one should see him at a private or social dance.

Nowhere in the west—perhaps nowhere in the world—are the pleasures of the dance more eagerly and constantly sought than in the rural Mormon settlements of Utah and Idaho. To the Mormon as well as Gentiles of Salt Lake and other cities and towns of the section the theatre, lectures and parties of different kinds lend the same variety to the amusements that are familiar in the east. But a large portion of the Mormon settlers are scattered through the rural districts, remote from such attractions; and for these people the one and almost the only diversion is dancing.

Mormon dances are frequently held at private houses, which are usually log cabins, or at school houses; but the most popular dancing floors are those of the Mormon churches, because these buildings are the most commodious ones in the settlements.

It is difficult to understand or explain how it is done, but no two-room log cabin of Utah or Idaho is so small that its floor will not offer dancing facilities for twenty or thirty guests, with corners and recesses under tables and in places for beds in which all the small children of the settlement soundly sleep from early evening until daylight, while their parents and older brothers and sisters keep time to the shrill notes of the "fiddler," who sits away from his chair on top of a table beneath which several infants are sleeping.

It is frequently stated that Mormons resent the presence at their dances of any persons not members of their faith. These statements are far from true. Nowhere is genuine western hospitality more generously observed than among the followers of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. No matter how strong the animosity engendered by the clanish feeling between the Mormons and Gentiles, it is seldom permitted to show at a dance, particularly if the Mormons are hosts. If the dance is of a public nature, any guest, no matter what his belief, is usually certain of a hospitable reception. If a house is the dancing place, the Gentile or stranger is welcome.

The method of dancing, the hospitality, and the social rules observed are much the same, whether the dance is held in a cabin, the school house or the church. Inasmuch as the church offers floor space for the greatest number of dancing feet, it affords the best opportunity for observing the interesting features of this kind of social diversion.

Most of the rural Mormon churches are built of logs. The general rule is to make them twice as long as wide, one length of logs determining the width, with two lengths for the sides.

The furniture is usually home made and rude, consisting of plain board benches and a rough high desk for the pulpit. This furniture is installed with an eye to a secular as well as religious use of the building. The pulpit and seats used for the Sunday services can easily be moved to make room for the evening dance. The pulpit is shoved into a corner, where it serves a double use for the festive occasion. On it are piled the baskets of lunch for the evening, and beneath it are spread the blankets for the bed of several babies.

Enough of the benches to encircle three sides of the room are placed against the walls for seats during the evening, and the rest are carried outside, where they are piled near the door.

Most of the ranchers and their families gather at a radius of six or eight miles at these church dances. Few are too old and none is too young to attend. The same set frequently congregate with their parents and grandparents.

Youths and maidens come in all sorts of conveyances. On horseback and on snowshoes, when the snow is deep, are the favorite methods of locomotion. The older people and small children usually come in lumber wagons or in large sleighs. In winter the sleigh boxes are filled with hay on which are spread quilts and blankets for the protection of the women and children. The horses are unhitched at the church and tied to the sleigh box, from which they munch hay throughout the night. The quilts are used to make beds beneath the pulpit or in corners for the babies and small children.

Frequently throughout the night the mothers hurry to these beds, perhaps leaving the set in which they are dancing to bestow maternal care upon the babies, whose hungry cries make such attention necessary.

The younger children who are old enough to dance are permitted to stay up and participate in the festivities of the early part of the night, after which they, too, are put to bed.

The bishop usually attends all church dances, and he is ex-officio master of ceremonies. The other two important persons are the fiddler and promoter or "caller out." Custom has decreed that these two men shall occupy elevated positions. Accordingly the rhythmic guidance of the feet usually emanates from a table, brought in for the occasion, on which are placed two chairs for these officials.

It might well have been an Idaho fiddler who inspired Tilly's description of the man who can:

Plunk an' plunk an' plink
An' tune 'er up and play,
An' jes' lay back an' laugh an' blink

At every rainy day.

But the fiddler is an active man. He conscientiously keeps time to his music with a vigorous stamping of his foot, and during the interludes between the numbers he is seldom idle. At such times his violin is either shrilly bewailing his efforts to "tune 'er up," or else it is more harmoniously tinkling to his picking of the strings. The repertoire of these rural Mormon fiddlers is remarkable, ranging all the way from the ancient "Sailor's Hornpipe" and "Soldier's Joy" to the latest waltzes of Sousa or Herbert.

Late in the night, when the fiddler tires of his sitting posture, he frequently relieves himself by abandoning his table seat and continuing his playing from the floor, around which he waltzes with his violin for a partner, his feet keeping step to the tune which his fingers pick from the strings.

The caller out is always an important person at a western dance. The one who officiated at the last Mormon dance that I attended was particularly interesting. He had but one eye. He energetically stamped and nodded time to the music, with both feet and his head, while his single eye winked the time for his calls. Keeping time to the music, he interspersed between the calls many humorous and original remarks. He called with a humming tune, always in one key, from his beginning of "How ter yer partner, n-n-n-n, first four for'd an' back, n-n-n-n now ye got it ag'in' cross over t' other side, n-n-n-n don't git in a hurry there, Bill, n-n-n-n the ladies change," all through the different figures to the last "Promenade all, you are too old and none is too young to attend. The same set frequently congregate with their parents and grandparents.

While he is at it the caller out works harder than the fiddler, but he makes up for it by working only half time. The usual rule is to alternate the evening's enjoyment, a square dance always following a round one, and vice versa. The bishop always opens and closes with prayer all dances that he attends. This does not prevent him from being one of the most active persons on the floor, participating in as many numbers as any of the younger men. At my last dance just referred to the bishop and his wife danced the "Home, Sweet Home" waltz together. Her hand still rested on his arm and their feet were hardly still after the concluding notes of the waltz, when he raised his left hand, every head bowed, and with his well chosen supplication the dance was dismissed.

During the evening I several times found the bishop's wife to be a most interesting person. She was an excellent dancer and a good conversationalist. The prettiest, brightest and most intellectual girl present was one of the forty-two children of another bishop. I have forgotten which one of the six wives was her mother, but believe it was the fifth.

One of the surprising things for a tenderfoot at these entertainments is to observe the grace of some of the dancers. The women may be attired in calico and be plain looking, and the men's attire may be rough, from the high-heeled boots to the blue flannel shirt, but many of them will waltz or dance the latest two-step as gracefully as the participants in a Fifth avenue ball.

The figures of the square dances are much the same as those in vogue fifty or seventy-five years ago, and with them are alternated the most fashionable and up-to-date round dances.

The figures of the square dances may

be unfamiliar to a tenderfoot, and he may be bewildered by the order to "choose partners for a square dance" until he learns that "square" is Idaho for varsovienne, but the spirit of the occasion is too much for him to keep his feet still. Under the urging of the hospitable bishop he is soon one of the "side gents" of a set, with a good dancer for a partner. With frequent "swinging yer partner" and "promenade all," he is soon initiated into the mysteries of "weaving the basket," "caging the bird," and other figures of emphatic movement.

The one-eyed caller out was an adept at introducing these figures in an interesting manner. It was nearly midnight when the fiddler set the feet in motion with the popular air to which thousands of soldiers marched away to war forty years ago. The lively measure instantly redoubled the efforts of the caller out, who interspersed with his calls more lively remarks than ever, while his feet, head and winking eye had difficulty in keeping time with the violin. His excitement was intense as he led up to his masterpiece with his humming call: "Choose partners, n-n-n-n, right, balance an' swing, n-n-n-n hurry there, Joe, n-n-n-n now ye lead ter the right once more, balance an' swing, n-n-n-n that's right, Margie, toes him around there, n-n-n-n trot ter the right once more, until the 'gents' approached their original position, and he broke out into the tune of the violin with "Lead ter the right once more an' swing."

Swing that girl, that pretty little girl, That girl you left behind you. My partner for that number was a large woman, the mother of two of the young people dancing in the same set. The vigorous manner in which she assisted in the last movement left some doubts in my mind as to which did the "swinging." The doubts were soon in which they were without seeing the end of the contest. Among them was the bishop, who did not even interrupt the waltz repertoire over and over again, passing from one tune to another without missing a note. And promptly in time with every note the eight feet kept in motion. It was a continual waltz, no intermissions being taken for promenades. Other waltzers would go on the floor and drop out at pleasure; but, like the successful advertiser, the four contestants "kept everlastingly at it."

At daylight the fiddler was still swinging away, and no break had been made in the waltz. Several of the older people were weary without seeing the end of the contest. Among them was the bishop, who did not even interrupt the waltz repertoire over and over again, passing from one tune to another without missing a note. And promptly in time with every note the eight feet kept in motion. It was a continual waltz, no intermissions being taken for promenades. Other waltzers would go on the floor and drop out at pleasure; but, like the successful advertiser, the four contestants "kept everlastingly at it."

A few weeks later two other young men started at midnight to settle a like rivalry in the same manner. In this case the young women did not contest for endurance. Each man had two partners, with whom he danced in relays, changing every hour. Two violinists also took turns in furnishing music, one coming into the tune and the other dropping out without missing a note. The young men made their change of partners while keeping constantly in motion. At 1 o'clock the next afternoon, after having waltzed continuously for thirteen hours, one of the men gave up the contest. The other contestant ceased waltzing a few minutes later.

A Dark and Muddy Complexion Does not become a neat woman. Lane's Tea will cure constipation, clear up the skin, sharpen the appetite and make you look and feel like a new person. It acts gently upon the stomach, liver and bowels. For sale by Godde-Pitts Drug company.

Several times during the night comes the announcement: "Choose partners for a Mormon dance." For this number each man has two partners, which adds to the complexity of the figures and increases the merriment of the occasion. Sometimes toward morning the older and less enthusiastic younger members of the party become tired, when variety is added to the entertainment by two or three of the best dancing couples who engage in a contest of endurance in an attempt to "dance each other

down." The waltz is always chosen for these contests, which are simply efforts to see which can keep continuously in motion for the longest time.

Considerable rivalry exists between two young couples in Teton Basin as to which young man and young woman were the better dancers and which had the more endurance. They accordingly started in at 1 o'clock one night to settle the question in a "dancing down" contest. For one hour they waltzed without pausing, and at the end of that time the adherents of each couple sought in vain for signs of fatigue in the other two. Two hours, and the interest of the onlookers became more intense. Three hours, and one of the girls audaciously asked the musician to play a little faster. Four hours, and the spectators urged the dancers to abandon the contest, but none of the four showed signs of fatigue or an inclination to desist.

The fiddler had agreed before the contest began that he would play as long as the dancers kept up. A single hour was sufficient to exhaust his supply of waltz music; but, like the hand organ grinder who runs into an inexhaustible supply of pennies, he repeated his waltz repertoire over and over again, passing from one tune to another without missing a note. And promptly in time with every note the eight feet kept in motion. It was a continual waltz, no intermissions being taken for promenades. Other waltzers would go on the floor and drop out at pleasure; but, like the successful advertiser, the four contestants "kept everlastingly at it."

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By starting a savings account of \$1.00 with us you can secure the free use of one of our Home Savings Banks to keep in your home to deposit the change which you generally waste. The \$1.00 is for security only, and you are given credit for it in a pass book, which, together with your other savings, draws interest. Remember, no charge made for the use of the bank. GET ONE TODAY.

Start an account NOW and watch it grow. Call and have this plan explained to you, or send your address and our agent will call. Distributing Office, 303 Auerbach Building. Office hours, 8 to 12 a. m. 1 to 5, 7 to 3 p. m.

Patriotic Americans

Shoulder Warranted American Pocket Knives. We have bought 1,500 DOZEN and 70 dozen on this contract are now here. Nearly all the merchants of Salt Lake City are selling imported knives, exclusively. We want you to see and know the difference, and for a week, beginning Saturday morning, we will sell:

Warranted Knives worth up to 50c at 25c
Warranted Knives worth up to 35c at 15c
Warranted Knives worth up to \$1.50 at 85c
Warranted Knives worth up to \$2.50 at \$1.45
Warranted Knives worth up to \$4.00 at \$1.95

A few imported knives in above assortment, to close out, all worth double.

AMERICAN CUT GLASS.

\$1.00.00 worth in this sale. You know the kind, the Genuine Bergen. Bergen cuts the glass, we cut the prices for one week, beginning Saturday morning, September 15th.

6-in. Nappy, regular price \$1.50; special price \$1.25
Carafe or Water Bottle, regular price \$2 to \$3; special price \$1.50
Four styles cutting and knives to select from.

All Other Cut Glass 20 Per Cent Discount.

Scott-Strevell Hardware Co.

N. B.—What's the matter with these for souvenirs of your visit to Salt Lake City?



The Switchman

requires Working Clothes that will stand hard service and at the same time present a drowsy and tasteful appearance. The RED SEAL Union Made Shirts, Corduroy Pants, Overalls, Jackets are in cut, workmanship and finish exactly adapted to his needs and will give the best returns obtainable in Comfort, Service and Style.

At your dealers or if not, send direct. Catalogs and Booklets for the asking.
R. L. McDONALD & CO.
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THE BEE HIVE Shoe Company

Sale Conditions--No Money Refunded. Exchanges Only After 6 p.m.

Going Out Of Business For Good!

We are "tired" of working for landlords--disgusted with having thousands of dollars absorbed in merchandise without fair returns, and absolutely dissatisfied in being compelled to cater to the "whims" of all human nature!

Stock Fixtures and Everything!

Must be sold in but a few days' time, and prices are quoted at about one-half of the original cost! Stupendous beyond comprehension are the values we are now forced to offer, but we need your help and no better method can we find to get it!

Positively No Goods Sold Before 10 a.m.

You can buy BABIES' SHOES from 10c to 50c; CHILD'S SHOES from 20c to \$1.00; MISSES' SHOES from 35c to \$1.50; BOYS' SHOES from 75c to \$1.45; LADIES' SHOES from 30c to \$2.95, and MEN'S SHOES from 75c to \$2.95 a pair.

Remember the Sale Lasts But a Few Days!

Vacating Order.

To D. Alexander and Julio Alexander and the Bee Hive Shoe Co., and D. Alexander, Manager:
You, and each of you, are hereby notified that you are required, and requested to surrender the possession of the store room now occupied by you and known as No. 128 South Main street, Salt Lake City, Utah, to the undersigned on the 19th day of September, 1901, and vacate said premises on said last mentioned day.
In case of your failure to vacate said premises and surrender the possession thereof to the undersigned on said 19th day of September, 1901, you will be charged at the rate of \$250.00 per month for the use and occupation thereof for each and every day after said 19th day of September, 1901. Your truly,
DICKSON, ELLIS & ELLIS, Attorneys for the undersigned.

Salt Lake City, Utah, September 6th, 1901.

By F. L. Gardner.

128 MAIN STREET.

EARL R. SMITH, Sale Manager.